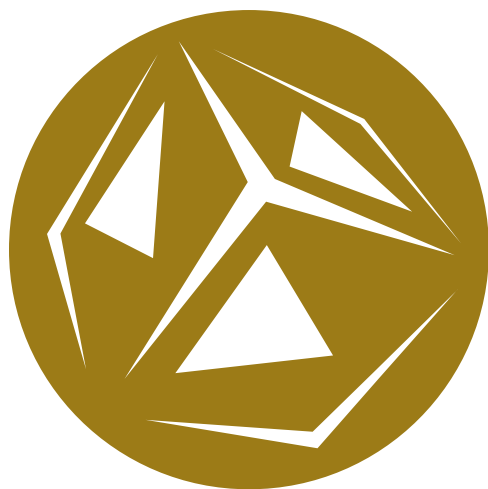


RollPlay



GM NOTEBOOK
ISSUE TWENTYSEVEN

Text: Adam Koebel

Art Direction/Layout: Daniel at LiveSpace

1

Hello Patrons!

What a tumultuous month! Several weeks of intense PVP that could lead to both of my shows being derailed and sent in a random new direction. How exciting! On top of all that we had TwitchCon, too. If you didn't get a chance, please make sure to check out the RollPlay panel we did there (https://youtu.be/MBAsyjj_Ed4) as a GM, it's always so interesting talking with players from another game and Octo and Elspeth had so much to say about Oddballs. Definitely worth a view if you haven't seen it, yet. Looks like November is shaping up to be pretty cool - here's what I've got prepared for Court of Swords and from ye olde Swan Song and Mirrorshades playbook!

Thank you so much for your support, and welcome to Issue 27 of the GM's Notebook.

Adam Koebel
RollPlay GM

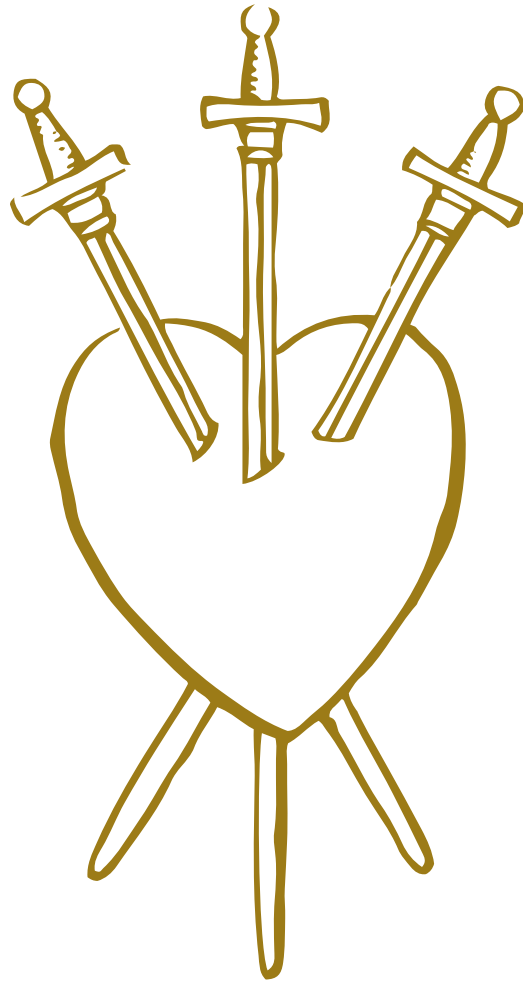


2

Table of Contents

Court of Swords: Episode 92 Prep	6
Court of Swords: Updated Cult Fronts	8
Court of Swords: Episode 92+	10
Swan Song: Ep. 24, Commentary Notes	12
Mirrosshades: Ep. 16, Commentary Notes	14

III



3

Court of Swords:

Episode 92 Prep



Court of Swords: Episode 92

- the girl was just a prison for an old-ass god that the cult wanted to wrest from the Court of Coins
- the god, King Tao Ti, Lord of Ogres, master of Hell (he invented it) was being punished by the gods for eternity for betraying his own, 10,000 years ago → technically it was never implemented
- the Cult thought that killing him would be bad (freeing him too early) and wanted him brought in
- the Page wanted to thwart his peers just for kicks, to see what would happen
- Tao Ti is so happy to be out, but he's chaotic evil af, so he wants revenge, etc.
- He'll grant the PCs a wish, then leave, or if they're cool, he'll try and hang out

The Cult

- will send agents after Yoji if they don't return, assuming his guilt
- still wants to capture King Tao Ti if they can, he's very powerful
- still wants the bell, for the Queen's project

The Spirits of the Wood

- want the Bell to be destroyed, buried again or otherwise dispatched to safety
- would be willing to deal with the PCs if they'll do that
- otherwise will go after the PCs / Kalimat particularly
- employ their creatures against the cult, tying them up and harassing them

The Night Serpent

- kind of doesn't care about much, she's got Yuan-Ti to work out
- is a future thing. her city is in the South, near the Court of Swords

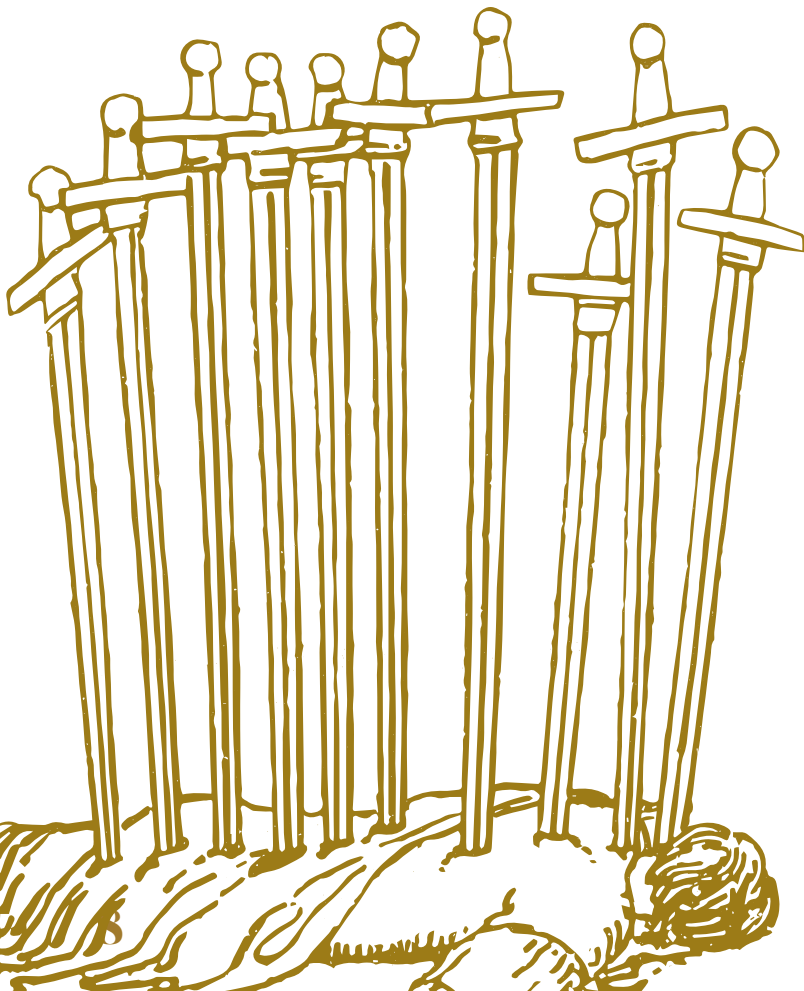
What's Next?

- figure out what to do with King of Hell Tao Ti (Blessed Uncle)
- where do they go? who is their antagonist, right now? what do the PCs want now?

4

Court of Swords:

Updated Cult Fronts



Fronts

The Cult's Pursuit of Power

- ☐ internal schisms
- ☐ the Page is Killed
- ☐ the Cult unifies under Glory
- ☐ the cult discovers 2 source
- ☐ a new source is captured
- ☐ the Cult completes their ritual

The Vengeful Forest

- ☐ travel in the woods is confounded
- ☐ attacks on cult operatives
- ☐ attack on the fortress (initial)
- ☐ attack on the fortress (full-on)
- ☐ the cult roused + on the run
- ☐ the cult expelled from the woods

Big King Tao Ti

- ☐ Tao Ti is freed from his prison
- ☐ He assembles some cultists
- ☐ they breach a gate into heaven
- ☐ Tao Ti is returned to Heaven
- ☐ Tao Ti is given 2 position in the bureaucracy
- ☐ Tao Ti's Hell is reinstated

5

Court of Swords:

Episode 92+



Court of Swords, 92+

- Jadara died, which means that the cult lost an operative (and a PC, albeit a double agent) and the Queen particularly took a hit
- Shadrack left the party, meaning that the Forest will turn its attention to eliminating the cult, given that it cannot be redeemed or managed
- Yoji, fearing reprisal or outright execution, may well simply leave, pursuing his own agenda
 - this means that he'll begin to age normally, losing his access to the magic of the Cult (though it's possible they're losing it, too)
- Kalimat is basically on his own, if Yoji leaves - he's got an ancient artifact of power once sealed away by a long-lost culture, he's being watched by the servants of the Night Serpent (who see him as a useful agent)
 - but also he's blind and lost, more or less!
- Right now, the game hinges on whether we stay with the Cult or we go somewhere else, which will get worked out @ the start of the episode, more or less
- Complicating things: Tao Ti offers Yoji and Kalimat a wish spell in thanks for freeing him...

- You create one object of up to 25,000 gp in value that isn't a magic item. The object can be no more than 300 feet in any dimension, and it appears in an unoccupied space you can see on the ground.
- You allow up to twenty creatures that you can see to regain all hit points, and you end all effects on them described in the *greater restoration* spell.
- You grant up to ten creatures that you can see resistance to a damage type you choose.
- You grant up to ten creatures you can see immunity to a single spell or other magical effect for 8 hours. For instance, you could make yourself and all your companions immune to a lich's life drain attack.
- You undo a single recent event by forcing a reroll of any roll made within the last round (including your last turn). Reality reshapes itself to accommodate the new result. For example, a *wish* spell could undo an opponent's successful save, a foe's critical hit, or a friend's failed save. You can force the reroll to be made with advantage or disadvantage, and you can choose whether to use the reroll or the original roll.

You might be able to achieve something beyond the scope of the above examples.

- which ought to be interesting...

NOTES:

SWAN SONG EP. 24

THE SYNDICATE

The best part of Stars Without Number (and this has been the case since the moment I laid eyes on it) is that it treats the world as a living, moving thing in which not just individual characters exist but the amalgam of those characters in Factions. Then, PCs can do as they do and befriend, frustrate and outright make enemies of not only mere other humans but of entire structures of society. It's really cool because it allows you to then, on the NPC level, treat each NPC like the offspring of their Faction - both like and unlike it. So while you could say things about "The Madari Syndicate" (or, I dare say, House Crux, for example) there's always the universally unexpected nature of people themselves, made more interesting by the contrast and comparison to their groupings. It made an easier job for me when the time came to make the NPCs in Swan Song really striking. To be able to make an individual distinct from but a part of their Faction made for a dramatic and engaging game.

Also of significant note here: "weapons-grade drive fuel waste" is a very dangerous phrase. Though I feel like most of these notes didn't make their way into the show - do you remember "Old Steel" Barton or the Hoveydan Verazat? Seems pretty cool, even though I never got to use it. Maybe we'll make Old Steel a Deathless.

CAPTAIN BEUFORD

JP is amazingly good at just throwing monkey wrenches into the works. Usually in the form of secret conspiracies or NPCs that come out of nowhere. "Hey Adam, I call my cousin who is a sorcerer and also a half-unicorn" which I think if you've been watching RollPlay for very long, you're smiling and nodding at this already. It's so much fun getting to know players and then look back and see their patterns in play.

Moto Panekeku

Her name means "more pancakes" which, whatever I love stupid NPC names.

Swan Song Ep. 24

- the Syndicate a) thinks that Higgs tried to fuck them out of the info McCrany should have had (access codes for Cabralesse Intelligence Assets) and specifically assumes Prosper was the one who did it ~ McCrany's brain has been blanked in places.

b) sent thugs from the ~~offices~~ ^{Three} Burning Scimitars, a Madari sub-clan, to find out what prosper did.

c) they want the data, but don't trust Higgs to play it straight with them

d) have commissioned the Swan Song to move weapons-grade drive fuel waste to Vinaya courtesy of James Han (stolen from Majid)

① Pirates attack the Swan Song when they arrive in Vinaya. Three fighter-class ships (Khanjar class) to steal the fuel waste before it reaches the Auction.

② One of the buyers is Luiz Serrano Fujikawa, a member of Onintza Libre looking to buy a weapon to turn the tides.

• Other buyers include a SOL Liason (Chuck "old Steel" Barton) a member of the Hoveydan Verazat (Mahmoud Khatami) and Ji Song (a Purity Initiative cleric)

③ The Cabralesse government (via the Order of Illuminated Philosophies) wants to "debrief" Pi / Prosper, etc.

↳ Corporate / Christian Government: "Neo-France Restoration Movement"

• clean • beautiful • embracing the best of humanity and technology

- General Rainier wants: Prosper to do his rightful duty.
- The OIP want to make sure all is going according "to plan"
- L2 phantome wants to understand the crew. (especially Piani)

The Conservative Pact opposes the NFRM and is making a deal to work with Purity.

(Pi's informational Matrix: 50,000 credits)

[~ Captain Beauford, on Cabral] 6MI

// Pirates ~ Highbeam motherfuckers // (vehicle-space 1)

[Wu is in shock.] • Rajani Van Dorne, Kalaya Bie, Musafa Li

~~WEAPONS~~ WEAPONS DISABLED!

(10 stealth) → failed

24/

switched

Mr. Man ~ Moto Paneketu

[MIRRORSHADES]

EPISODE 16
COMMENTARY
MIRRORSHADES EPISODE 16

There's something delightful about coming up with translated names - imagining what the name is in whatever language; Japanese, Sperethiel, Orcish - and then saying it in English. Exhibit A: the Turbo Lemon Nightmare, a gang with a laughable name in English but I'm sure they're much more intimidating in Japanese. Though, to be honest, there's something about the way Japan names things in English that has its own absurd logic - the Turbo Lemon Nightmare is probably actually written as "Taabo Remon Naitomaru" in katakana anyway. Isn't language fun?

THE SITUATION

I write down all these things that could or might happen but the best shit is never on them. It's always "the PCs do karaoke" or "everything is on fire" and you never plan for that stuff. As a GM, you have to create structure but not for the PCs to follow. It's more of a landscape for them to demolish and redesign. There has to be structure for chaos to thrive. The GM, the eternal straight-man, ours is to take the pie to the face over and over and to set up for the next gag. Which I love about it. When it comes down to it, the GMs job is so much just about spotlighting. For me, having a general idea of how the world might look without PC intervention helps see where the fault lines are.

NATIONAL BEAUTIFICATION ZONE

Add it to the list of uncomfortable Japanese names for things. A local 2050 version of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, maybe.

CALL / SEND TAPE

Why call when you can send a VHS tape. The cyberpunk future awaits.



Rollplay: Mirrorshades (ep. 16)

- In the case - a stolen cyberdeck prototype (manufactured by Shiawase)
 - ↳ stolen by Nakamoto Akiko and intended for the Yakuza (Watada Rengo) so the Yaks would keep taking care of Nakamoto Yoshi (her little brother) on Yomi Island
- However the Turbo Lemon Nightmare Erikizoku (hacker gang) sprung an ambush and kidnapped Nakamoto-san

(Brian Emmerich, ~~Shiawase~~ Computer Division)
Fujiwara

the Situation

- 1) The Yaks want the prototype deck back from the Runners
- 2) TLN want a) hacker secrets / access codes from Nakamoto + b) to ransom her back
- 3) Takahashi wants the deck and Nakamoto back before she gives up any corporate (or personal) secrets.

↳ Takahashi instructs the PCs to bring the deck to a research facility in Chiba owned by a Shiawase subsidiary (the Nakatomi Corporation) where it will be safe

* Yakuza goons try to drive them off the road and into a National Beautification Zone (a bad place so they can jack the gear.

* Takahashi-san sends a courier with some "supplies" the guns that were confiscated at the airport. However, he warns the Runners that being spotted armed so heavily will draw the attention of corporate security, and they must be absolutely certain to avoid that.

* blonk's mysterious gift, if opened within the next 10 days, contains an IP and passkey plus a physical address in Seattle. It's an invitation ...

(Yakuza use "Mafia Soldier" stat block)

Attack 5 dice
pool 9 dice
Defend 5+3

✗



8 ✗
5 2

6 dmg
✗

- ✓ 1) An unsolicited deliveryman comes to the door to check it out. ✓
- ✓ 2) A Watada Rengo goon "canvasses" the neighborhood.
- ✓ 3) A Yakuza squad invites the PCs to politely return the case / puts surveillance on the house.

#4) Road attack.

#5) Robbery @ home

#6) Yaks hire Shadowrunners

• the Erikizoku ~~call~~ Shiawase to demand a bunch of NuYen
↳ send a VHS tape to

• Takahashi wants the PCs to handle both for him

(House of Green Leaves)

• Noburo Ando, Gumi

Beliefs

Instincts

Goals

* Set Up Thread *

(TN 9)

TN 7 Thresh 2

(Rating 5 IC)

5/10

XXXXXXXXXX

